

2017 Foundations of Learning Assessment Report

DRAKE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This report summarizes 2011-2017 results of the Foundations of Learning Assessment (FLA). Incoming students complete the FLA during Welcome Weekend to provide information about their learning experiences prior to coming to Drake as well as their expectations for their experiences at the institution. The instrument also asks students about ways they plan to engage at Drake.

Highlights from the 2017 FLA Report

Student responses to the current survey (Fall 2017) differed from the five-year trend in some notable ways. Examples of areas where current students rated skills higher or showed no change compared to historical averages include knowledge of how to participate effectively in the democratic process and their understanding of the historical, political, and social connections of past events. **Recommendation:** Continue to create opportunities for students to develop these skills, particularly in non-election cycles.

For other skill items, current students rated their skills lower compared to historical averages. Examples of areas where students rated their skills lower include "understanding perspectives and experiences that are different" (7% lower), "executing appropriate mathematical operations for a given question" (8% lower), and "employing evidence effectively in writing" (6% lower). **Recommendations:**

- Continue progress related to Drake's Campus Climate Continuous Improvement Project.
- Continue to foster an atmosphere where students have opportunities to engage with diverse others, for example formal activities like service-learning projects.¹
- Review possible support needs for this cohort of students in math and writing.
- Consider the intersection of students' willingness to talk to professors when they have problems and ability to adjust to academic challenges. Given the decrease in these non-cognitive items, what are the intervention strategies to help students engage and find academic support.

Table 9 provides an overview of student interests and plans. The 2017 incoming cohort had a decline in the percent of students who indicated plans to take a course with service learning. While this represents a specific point in time before student engagement at the institution, there may be value in reviewing the ways that incoming students understand opportunities for community engaged learning at Drake.

¹ Reason, R. D. (2014, December 29). Encouraging Perspective Taking among College Students. Retrieved December 13, 2017, from <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/encouraging-perspective-taking-among-college-students>
Association of American Colleges & Universities A VOICE AND A FORCE FOR LIBERAL EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Student Relative Strengths and Weaknesses

Table 1. 2012-2017 FLA Responses to Skill Areas, Previous 5-year average and 2017 Results, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

Based on your experiences in high school and other education venues prior to attending Drake, how strong do you believe your skills are in these areas?	Previous 5-year average	2017	Change
Articulate a vision of my own values, ethics, or core beliefs	78%	75%	-3%
Ability to read carefully	82%	77%	-5%
Understand the perspectives & experiences of people who are different than you	79%	72%	-7%
Ability to integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences	76%	71%	-5%
Construct reasoned arguments	75%	73%	-2%
Evaluate reasoned arguments	74%	72%	-2%
Communicate effectively with people from other cultures and backgrounds	65%	63%	-2%
Apply understanding of ethical issues when developing solutions	67%	62%	-5%
Understand the ethical issues related to the use & misuse of information	69%	64%	-5%
Evaluate the quality or reliability of information	67%	64%	-3%
Employ evidence effectively in writing	67%	61%	-6%
Execute appropriate mathematical operations for a given question	60%	52%	-8%
Analyze differences between industrialized and developing areas of the world	55%	51%	-4%
Understand the historical, political, and social connections of past events	55%	55%	0%
Ability to use educational experiences to analyze civic and global issues	53%	52%	-1%
Knowledge in how to participate effectively in the democratic process	50%	55%	5%
Read and understand scientific writings written for an informed lay audience	42%	37%	-5%
Create or interpret fine art (ex. painting, sculpture, music, theatre)	31%	32%	1%

Student- Faculty Interaction

Table 2. 2012-2017 FLA Responses to Faculty Interaction, Previous 5-year average and 2017 Results, Ranked by Percent

I hope to interact with Drake faculty outside the classroom in the following ways:	Previous 5 year average	2017	Change
By visiting them during office hours	87%	87%	0%
Through study groups for courses they teach	80%	78%	-2%
On a research or creative project	77%	73%	-4%
As advisors to my student organizations	59%	62%	3%
In social settings	47%	48%	1%

Engagement and Student Experience

Table 3. 2014-2017 FLA Responses to Academic Engagement, Previous 3-year average and 2017 Results, Ranked by "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"

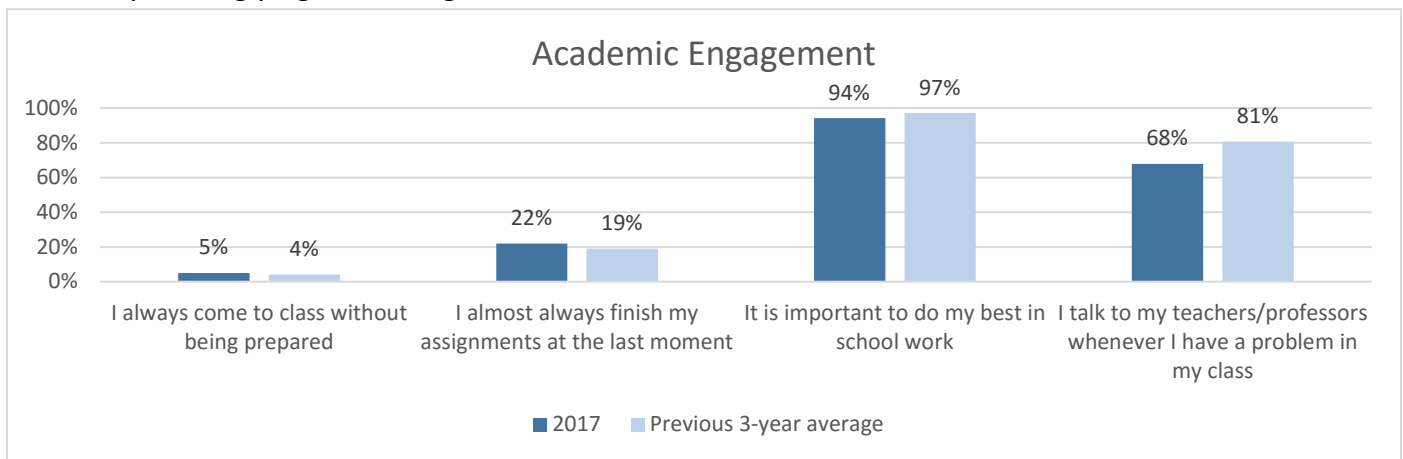


Table 4. 2014-2017 FLA Responses to Academic Self-Efficacy, Previous 3-year average and 2017 Results, Ranked by "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"

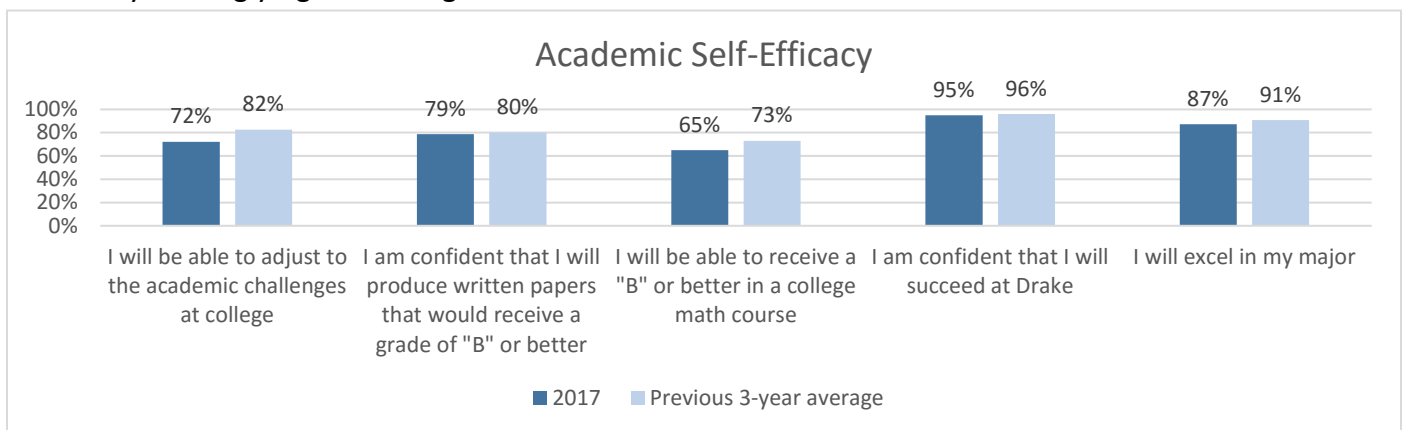


Table 5. 2014-2017 FLA Responses to Campus Engagement, Previous 3-year average and 2017 Results, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

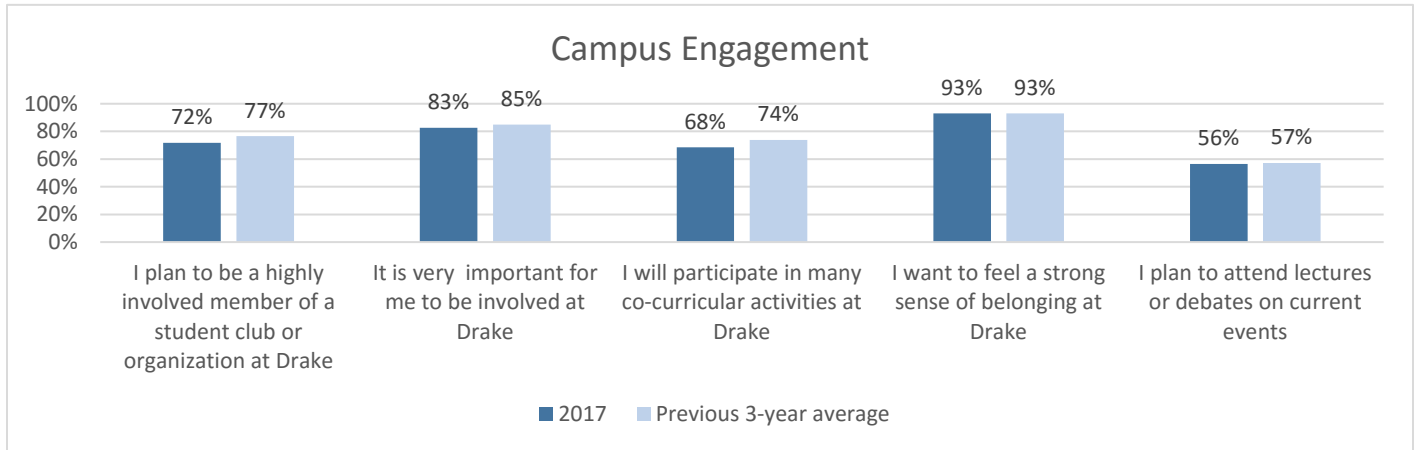


Table 6. 2014-2017 FLA Responses to Social Comfort, Previous 3-year average and 2017 Results, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

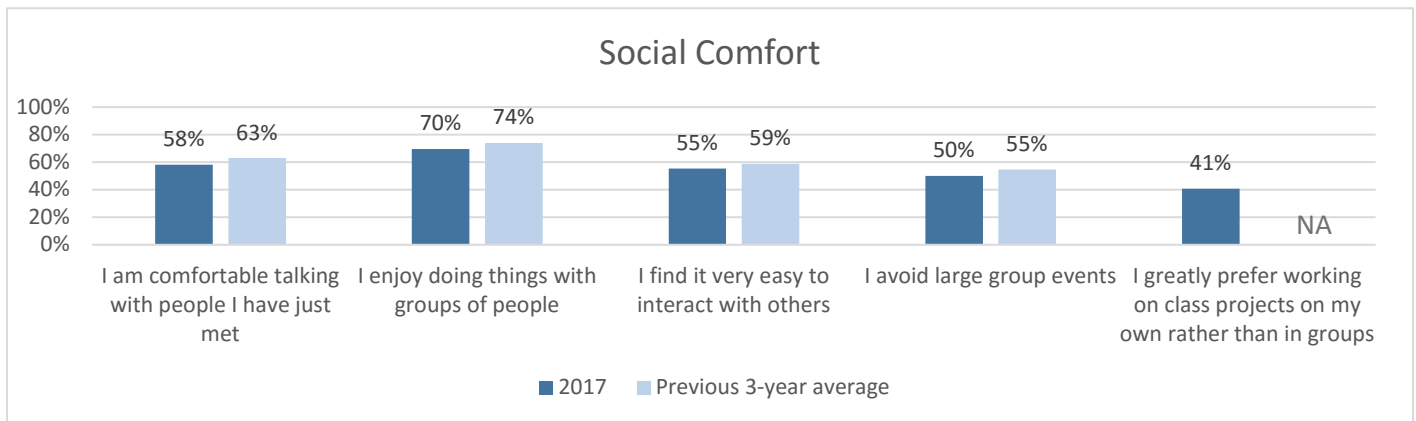


Table 7. 2014-2017 FLA Responses in the area of Educational Commitment, Previous 3-year average and 2017 Results, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

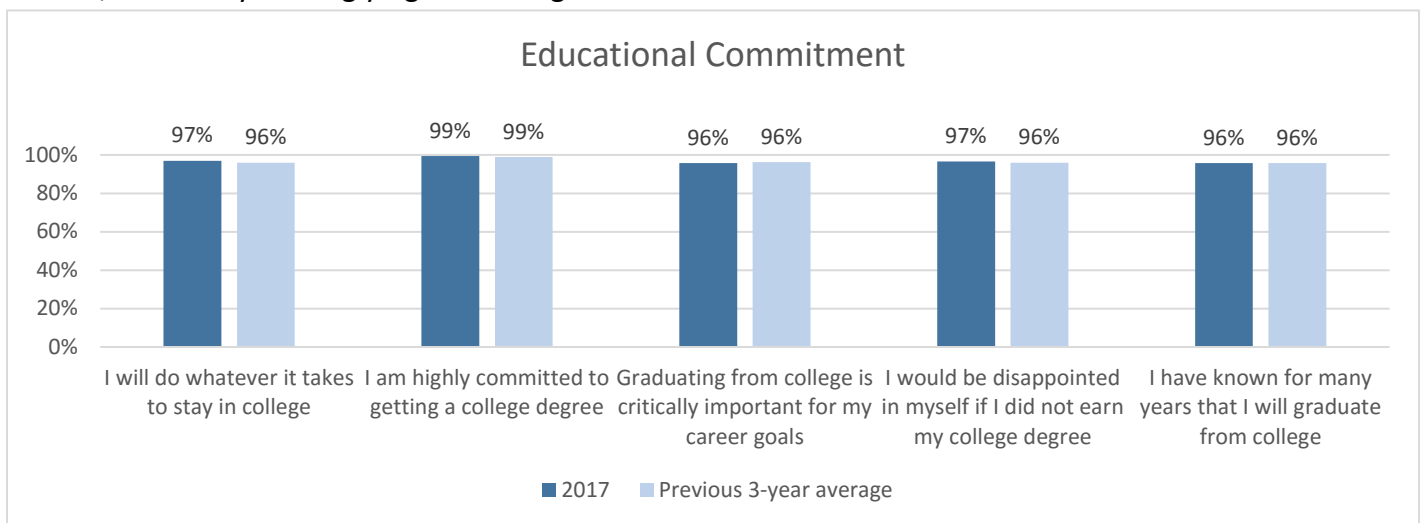
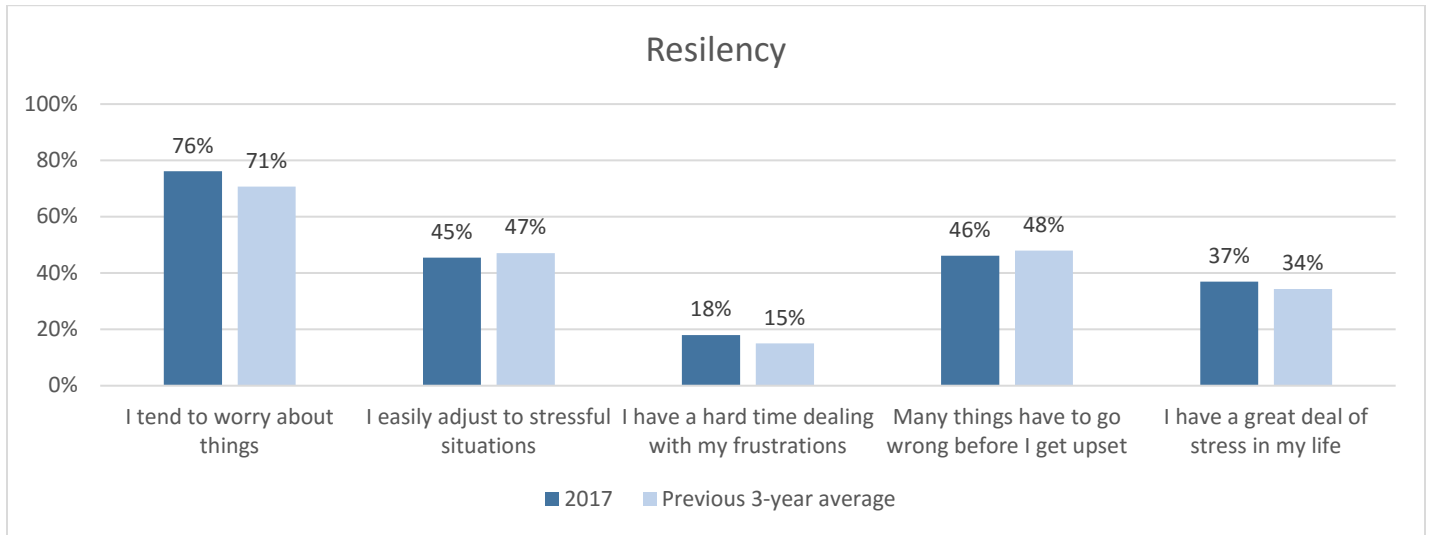


Table 8. 2014-2017 FLA Responses in the area of Resiliency, Previous 3-year average and 2017, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”



Student Interest Areas

Table 9. 2012-2017 FLA Responses on Interest/Plan Areas, Previous 5-year average and 2017 Results, Ranked by Percent "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"

To what extent do you agree with the follow statements:	Previous 5-year average	2017	Change
I plan to take a course that has a service learning component/experience.	65%	57%	-8%
I plan to take courses that enhance my perspective on international issues.	67%	66%	-1%
I plan to take courses that enhance my perspective on diverse issues in the U.S.	68%	68%	0%
I plan to study abroad while enrolled at Drake.	64%	64%	0%
I plan to study a language other than my native language at Drake.	35%	35%	0%